

Comments of Connecticut State Representative Dave Yaccarino (87th District) Regarding the Connecticut Democratic State Central Committee Request For Advisory Opinion

I thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding a recent submission to the Federal Elections Commission. The attempt to use federal account funds for an activity that is clearly related to state election candidates circumvents a ban on state contractor contributions that has been upheld as an acceptable response to a history of corruption in the state.

I find it imperative to voice my strong opposition to the request of the Connecticut Democratic State Central Committee's request to use federal campaign dollars for state elections.

After several documented scandals involving improper contributions and gifts from state contractors, the Connecticut General Assembly responded by passing a comprehensive Campaign Finance Reform Act (CFRA) passed in 2006 that included, among many other clean election provisions, a total ban on state contractors and prospective contractors contributing to the campaigns of elected state officials.

As a second concern, the sovereignty of Connecticut in election laws pertaining to state candidates is paramount in instances when elections of those candidates fall outside federal oversight. As illustrated by passage of the CFRA, Connecticut used the scandals of the past to enact some of the strictest election laws in the country, designed in part to keep contractor money and the potential for corruption out of the election process. Connecticut's laws regarding this are much more restrictive than the federal laws, with the rationale for such enactment already decided by federal courts. To allow an interpretation of federal law, in addressing a candidate for state election, to circumvent a closely drawn law to a significant state interest in combatting the appearance of corruption undermines our legislature's authority in adopting election laws that adhere to the intent and spirit of the CFRA.

In summary, I strongly oppose the attempt by the DSCC to improperly circumvent Connecticut's campaign finance laws and the ambitious clean election program that arose from the corruption scandals of contractor contributions to elections. To approve the use of federal account funds

for a state election, in a race that the FEC has no other jurisdiction over, would greatly undermine elections in Connecticut as well as the public's trust in their elected officials.